

**MINUTES OF THE  
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE**

**April 3, 2002  
MAG Cholla Room, 2nd Floor  
302 North First Avenue  
Phoenix, Arizona**

**MEMBERS ATTENDING**

Jim Book, Glendale	Bruce Dressel, Scottsdale
Alan Sanderson, Mesa	Jim Decker, Tempe
Brian Latte, Chandler	Tim Wolfe, ADOT
*Bruce Ward, Gilbert	Ron Amaya for Scott Nodes, Peoria
Dale Thompson, Maricopa County	Dave Mueller for Chuck Hydeman, Goodyear
*Bob Steele, Phoenix	*Mary Kihl, ASU
Bob Ciotti, RPTA	Alan Hansen, FHWA
*Terry Conner, DPS	
*Ellis Perl, Surprise	

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Don Wiltshire, MAG Associate	Anne MacCracken, RPTA
Ahsan Kazmi, Michael Baker Jr., Inc.	Bill Vachon, FHWA
Mike Mah, Chandler	Alisa Sauvageot, ADOT
Paul Ward, MAG	Randy Allenstein, ADOT
Steve Tate, MAG	Sarath Joshua, MAG
Brian Buchanan, PBS&J	
Hilda M. Velasco, FHWA	
Jimmie Dixon, Glendale	

\* Not present or represented by proxy

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Jim Book called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m and asked that everyone introduce themselves. During introductions Brian Latte announced that he is leaving Chandler and will be replaced by Mike Mah who was in attendance.

2. **Approval of March 6, 2002 Meeting Minutes**

Alan Sanderson moved and Ellis Perl seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve minutes of the March 6, 2002 ITS Committee meeting.

### 3. Call to Audience

Chairman Book made a call to the audience providing an opportunity to members of the public to address the ITS Committee. There was no comment from the audience.

### 4. Program Managers Report

- Concept of Operations RFP – The RFP was advertised on March 17<sup>th</sup> and will close on April 15<sup>th</sup>. A selection panel will be formed to review proposals.
- New committee member from Avondale. Chairman Book welcomed the new committee member, Mike Smith of Avondale who was unable to attend the meeting. He also thanked Brian Latte for serving on the MAG ITS Committee for nearly four years and wished him good luck.
- Meeting Schedule. The committee agreed to cancel the July 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. The August 7<sup>th</sup> meeting was moved to Thursday August 15<sup>th</sup> 10 AM. Tim Wolfe verified that the Freeway Service Patrol meeting was scheduled for 9AM the same day.
- A potential ITS project that would compete for TIP closeout funds has been suggested by Tempe. The project would involve upgrading of signal preemption equipment on Chandler fire trucks to enable them to function under the coded mode of operation. The total cost of this proposed project is estimated at \$ 35,000. Jim Decker explained that Tempe and Phoenix have delayed requiring coded signals to preempt their signals, in order to accommodate Chandler fire trucks that operate in border areas. Brian Latte indicated that there movement to begin coding by all cities. Alan Sanderson stated that since Mesa started preemption they have had problems. There are 300 preemptions a day in Mesa that is the primary reason why Mesa favors the use of coded preemption to prevent unauthorized preemptions and also to keep track of preemption usage.

### 5. Discussion on Timely Obligation of ITS Projects

Chairman Book welcomed Randy Allenstein and Alisa Sauvageot and thanked them for agreeing to participate in the discussion. Sarath Joshua provided a brief background for this topic. Randy Allenstein and Alisa Sauvageot of ADOT explained in detail the project review process at the ADOT local government section, and the federal regulations that the process must adhere to. He asked members to identify issues. Mr. Allenstein stated that he was here to listen to everyone and find solutions. He explained that environmental regulations may be what is making the process delays. He stated that whenever a teaspoon of dirt is disturbed by a project, it requires environmental clearance. There was a lively discussion on why such strict environmental regulations are required. He stated that we need to go by the existing environmental laws. Jim Decker asked if there were guidelines on the process. Mr. Allenstein said that guidelines exist and are available at the ADOT website. He emphasized that what we need to do is to streamline the process. Perhaps advancing the design portion of the project is one way to ensure that projects make obligation deadlines. Jim Book stated that the current time frame for processing projects, 18 months, is what is causing problems. He asked is the list of categorical exclusions be expanded. Alisa

Sauvageot replied that Congress has laid out specifically what can be included. Those are projects that do not involve ground disturbances. ADOT has developed a one-page environmental document for ITS projects like signal preemption. A detailed description of the environmental process was provided. She said what can be done is to explore how specific ITS projects can be best accommodated within the process. She said that hanging a VMS in Goodyear or Tempe may not be a problem but in downtown Phoenix someone may file an environmental violation complaint that it is obstructing view of a historical structure. Brian Latte said that a better understanding by Local Govt Section staff of ITS projects may be helpful. He also mentioned that category 2 projects require a qualified biologist to certify that digging a trench for fiber conduit would result in no impact to endangered species. Alisa cited some examples on why that is required. Paul Ward, commenting that this was a useful discussion, stated that a detailed presentation on environmental requirements for all MAG committees may be required. Brian Latte said that on one project by the time Chandler got comments back from ADOT local government, a note with review comments stated that the application had expired and Chandler must apply all over again. Jim Book said that the system needs to be modified at a higher level. He also stated that he gets different interpretations from FHWA and ADOT on the requirements. Bill Vachon said that FHWA is developing a guidelines document. Jim B asked how do we let other members know of a specific interpretations. Sarath Joshua asked is that guidance document is the same as the ADOT document mentioned earlier. Bill Vachon said it was different. In response to a question if this was unique to Arizona, Mr. Vachon stated that all over the country there is a demand for environment streamlining. Paul Ward suggested that perhaps MAG and eventually state should seek changes to the system. Jim Book asked what can be done to address this issue. He asked Sarath to find out about ADOT local government requirements and make them available to the committee.

Alan Sanderson said we need to address the immediate problem by asking TRC to permit extension of projects from one- to two-years; have a group to look at the process. He asked are there some way within the existing process ITS project can be accommodated. Alan Hansen stated that the ICONS Procurement project by Maricopa County did not ask for a FHWA review. Randy Allenstein said that when a project is established ADOT will assign a staff person. The ADOT local government section is staffed by a group of 3 fulltime and 3 contract employees handling all types of projects. Chairman Book asked if action was needed to request that TRC consider extending the time frame for projects. Paul Ward will recommend to TRC that at least a short-term change to permit a further 1-yr extension to projects in danger of losing funds. Alan Sanderson is interested in forming a team to look at the process. Environmental clearance can be done up front before 30% of the project is designed.

6. Status Reports by Committee Members

Several members provided brief updates.

7. Next Meeting Date

Next meeting date was announced as 10:00 AM on Thursday May 2, 2002.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Jim Book at 11:30 A.M.